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IT'S EASY TO ATTACK

*A Sharpening of the Anarchist
Struggle in Barcelona*



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Translated from Spanish and Catalan by Porlos

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During the night, we smashed the windows of a bank on Rogent, close to the evicted house, and we attacked the municipality building of St. Martí with paint bombs, disregarding the two cops who were inside.

Because to live is to resist, and to obey is to die.

Communique for actions against the evictions

from Barcelona Indymedia, November 2, 2009

With the passing of the years the state continues to improve its techniques of social control, always under an increasingly democratic mask. There's no need for a gorilla from the Policia Nacional beating the people on the street when a cop with a nice smile can simply *transfer* the people who are insubmissive to the increasingly intimate laws from the street to the prison, to be tortured with increasingly lengthy sentences in institutions that the press portray as increasingly hygienic and comfortable.

This year the government continues to form the Neighborhood Police units, and the police are sent to search for girls and boys who are skipping school, who are outside of their assigned place. This year the social services have more power to steal "delinquent youth" from their (poor) families in order to pressure the parents to participate more in suppressing disobedience, starting as early as they can. In the realm of squatting, the police have established the norm of long waits before executing surprise evictions, in order to exhaust the resistance, and waves of evictions during autumn when it gets cold and finding a house is more difficult, all in order to convert riots into moving day.

We are those who don't want a more comfortable prison, neither in an institution nor on the street. We are those who don't believe history has only one path, written by the state, towards a society that is increasingly controlled, and increasingly dead.

For this reason, we reacted to the eviction of the squatted house Vila Kula, that had been occupied for 6 years and marked the ninth eviction in Barcelona in the month of October. At 8 in the morning, during the eviction, we burned dumpsters to partially block the streets Valencia and Passeig Maragall, on both sides of the massive police deployment and all the undercovers who were stationed in that area to prevent just such a response. We especially have to laugh at the group of motorcycle cops who were just one block away from one of the fires and could not stop us.

Background

After the death of Franco and the transition from fascism to democracy, the anarchist movement in Catalunya swelled up again to proportions unseen since the Civil War. It was clear that the anarchists, centered around the CNT, enjoyed a great popular legitimacy, and hundreds of thousands of people came to their first rallies. But this was quickly stamped out by police repression and squandered by the position of social irrelevance chosen by the organization itself. The interests of organizational survival had made the CNT even more conservative in the long and delicate years of exile, so when they were able to operate openly again in Spain they missed the importance of the moment and set out on a path of legal syndicalism (which in the days of Franco constituted a direct challenge to the system but now was just a recuperation of the struggle). Lacking the ability to speak to the depth of the problems of work and government but also lacking the institutional backing the more moderate unions had, the Organization and its followers quickly declined, even within workplace struggles, although not before they fought some important battles in that terrain. Because of the type of fight they had chosen, their essential weapon was not social presence, effective attack, or contagious ideas, but numbers, and as they lost those numbers they could not sustain the fight and their workplace victories were quickly forgotten as they lost their relevance to workers, and as Capital became less concentrated and jobs more precarious with the closing down of factories and the boom of the tourism-fueled economy.

During the years of dictatorship, a second current had broken away and set off on an insurrectionary path, mirroring the young *pistoleros* who defied the older syndicalists in the '20s and began agitating and preparing for armed struggle, eventually creating the FAI and making the July 1936 revolution possible (one must also mention the contribution of the more moderate syndicalists, who may not have known how to defeat the Fascists in armed struggle but did know how to take over the running of their industries).

This second current of the '60s and '70s, concentrated in the anarchist youth group Juventudes Libertarias or the anti-authoritarian/extreme Left MIL, carried out propaganda and clandestine attacks against the Franco regime.

The inheritors of this more combative tradition of Iberian anarchism increased their distance from the syndicalists after the CNT's backpedaling around the Scala affair in '78. They were progressively disowned by the Organization and began to feel alienated from the social centers and *ateneos* associated with the CNT, where they had once found refuge. They found their place, instead, in *la okupación*, the squatters movement that began to flourish in Spain later in the '80s. Here a new generation of anarchists came into the struggle, which was no longer for society or for the commons, but for the defense of their own autonomous spaces. The greatest strength of the CNT—its insistence on being present in the problems and realities faced by lower class members of society—was discarded along with all its weaknesses, and replaced with an ethic of *hazlo tu mismo*, "Do-It-Yourself."

At the end of the '90s and beginning of the '00s, illegalist and insurrectionist thinking, primarily from Italy, made great waves in the new anarchist movement and established a theoretical standard. This development led to a tactical escalation that was both unsustainable and ill timed, though in other ways it brought fresh air and a new sense of confidence to the movement. Spectacular attacks, such as the letter bombing campaign around 2004 in support of the FIES prisoners, attacks whose only real audience were the government officials targeted and the media, which were expected to spread the news, became considered as the forefront of a struggle that had no popular base nor much in the way of efforts to connect to one.

Simultaneously, the post-fascist police throughout the Spanish state, and in Catalunya in particular, were democratizing. Catalunya's new *mossos d'escuadra* learned crowd control and political policing in the UK, Germany, and Israel. They would no longer repeat the provocative scenes of brutality regularly enacted by the *Guardia Civil*, at least not so often. The new efficiency of the police, coupled with a Giuliani-style social reengineering of Barcelona on the basis of public messaging and minute social ordinances, led to a marked decline of popular violence. A city that had once been known for its riots along with the likes of Berlin had in the period of a few years become a laughingstock among European anarchists. Thus, the professional violence of the anonymous anarchist bombers no longer had a complement in the public realm, and became cut off from the social reality. In other words, as opportunities to participate in public acts of violence against the system, such as riots or rowdy protests, became less frequent and less accessible, other more directed forms of violence such as the bombings made sense to fewer and fewer people, meaning that the pool of future participants, sympathizers, and prisoner supporters was drying up, leaving the fish exposed, flopping about in the air and easy to scoop up. And this is exactly what happened: in several major cases, people who had participated in bombings and other attacks were apprehended and imprisoned, and subsequently anarchists who

Joaquin was released to us in July, and he credits the solidarity movement with this victory.

In the summer, Amadeu Casellas went back on hungerstrike, eventually going 100 days without food, several of those days on a water fast as well. Outside, the solidarity actions intensified. On September 20, anarchists in Ourense, Spain, placed an incendiary device outside a government building, the Palacio de Justicia, causing minor damages. Another day, anarchists in this area stopped the train to Madrid by mounting a burning barricade on the tracks. Anarchists in Ponferrada sabotaged the train lines between Galicia and Barcelona by throwing a steel cable over the electricity lines, causing a shortcircuit just minutes before the train was to pass. Early one morning in October, about 250 anarchists participated in four different road blockades, shutting down the major highway entrances to Barcelona starting at about 8:00 and lasting over half an hour. On October 5, anarchists in Carmel, a hillside neighborhood in Barcelona "perfect for an ambush" according to the communique, set some dumpsters on fire and the police were called. When two cops arrived at the scene and got out of their car, they were pelted with rocks by a group of people situated on a street higher up on the hillside. The cops took off running and their patrol car had its windows smashed.

On the night of October 8, anarchists in Guadalajara sabotaged the Madrid-Barcelona train line by setting off incendiary devices in the electrical and mechanical boxes along the tracks. The same day, people in Valencia took to the stage during a major youth-organized concert and read out a communique in support of Amadeu, having arranged to do so before hand with one of the more sympathetic bands. On the 11th of October, a group of anarchists attacked a Barcelona office of the Policia Nacional with stones. On October 13, anarchists in Valencia set fire to three banks in solidarity with Amadeu. Early that morning, in Galicia, anarchists blocked the train line between Coruña, Santiago, and Vigo, with burning barricades. The next day in Compostela, six incendiary devices were placed outside the offices of a private company, accompanied by a communique that stated, in Gallego, "Know that if he is not released we will continue burning this city every day." On the 23rd of October, a group of 20 people occupied Radio Catalunya in Barcelona, trying to read a communique in support of Amadeu over the airwaves and to protest the role of the media in silencing the case, while more people gathered at the doors to keep the police from entering and evicting the occupation.

No one got caught for any of these actions. If they had, they would have received support, and had nothing to be ashamed of.

Freedom for the Prisoners!

Early in the morning, Monday, May 25, the windows of two banks in the neighborhood of Clot were smashed and painted with the message "Solidarity with Joaquin and Amadeu" (two anarchist prisoners struggling for their release) and a circle-A. In the afternoon on May 30, a group of masked people pulled various objects into the streets and set them on fire, shutting down Travessera de Gracia. They left behind a banner and flyers demanding liberty for Joaquin and Amadeu. In Plaça Lesseps 40 people gathered early in the evening on May 13 to stop traffic and hang a solidarity banner from a bridge, but two motorcycle cops appeared on the scene. When the two motorcycle cops went into a bar, the action continued. They locked two construction fences together across the major road, stopping traffic, hung the banners, and took advantage of the unexpected new element in the situation to kick the police motorcycles and pop their tires. Another action in solidarity with the two prisoners occurred in the neighborhood of Sants, at four in the afternoon on the 12th of May, when people attacked a tourist bus with paint bombs. During the action they distributed a flyer:

Spain is a Prison

While with one hand the State passes tourists through our city, with the other it suffocates and massacres all those who do not submit to its laws. Torture in the police station, long prison sentences against political militants, constant deaths in crowded and unhealthy prisons, persecution and systematic imprisonment of immigrants, or the exploitation of labor within the prisons themselves, is the authentic reality of this rotten democracy, even though it doesn't appear in the colorful touristic guides distributed by the city government.

This infrastructure designed to contain poverty and rebellion which the system itself produces will never be augmented by our complicity. We will not look the other way, we will not swallow their lies about "re-insertion" or "respect for the law" that the defenders of misery constantly repeat. We will not forget our imprisoned compañeros/as, nor leave anyone to stand alone who rebels against the prison system from the inside.

Immediate freedom for Amadeu Casellas, on hungerstrike since April 20! Immediate freedom for Joaquin Garcés! Solidarity with all prisoners in struggle!

were more vocal or active in supporting the prisoners were framed and imprisoned.

Needless to say, even these isolated actions soon disappeared. The combative part of the anarchist movement had become so pacified by 2006 that when the squat scene, which housed most of those anarchists, was threatened with a serious wave of evictions, many predicted it would be unable to defend itself and would disappear too within a couple of years. Sections of the squatters set off permanently down the path of reformism and housing rights.

After much blistering criticism and self-abasement, most of which was formulaic and devoid of content, projectuality, or constructive proposals, recently some small signs began to appear that the anarchists have produced and spread some good critiques of their weaknesses and begun to recover their power to attack the system and influence society (the third necessary motion, the one that creates autonomous space, had long been and still was their strong suit). If this trend continues it would be promising indeed, because few anarchist movements have succeeded in reversing the gains democratization has brought to the engineers of social control. And it would be nice to remind ourselves, and not only in romanticized places like Greece, that history is not unidirectional.

Here are a few texts translated from Spanish or Catalan, as well as reports about some of the actions that reflect these ideas being put into practice.

It's Easy to Attack

from Antisistema 25, Barcelona
May 2009

The streets are filling up with more and more police. Each cop hides a secret: that it's easy to attack. Everywhere they aren't—and they can't be in all places at the same time—there are banks, real estate offices, car showrooms, airline offices, supermarkets, surveillance cameras, ticket machines in the metro, blank walls, advertisements. And every time they tighten their laws and their occupation of our neighborhoods, that which constitutes an attack becomes more accessible, more common, more easy. When they declare war on graffiti, under their campaign of civic ordinances, we can wage war against the state with cans of spraypaint. When they try to impose total control over public space, every disobedience and spontaneity can be an act of rebellion.

Preparing Ourselves

Acts of rebellion will not abolish the state in pieces. And they won't have a gradual visible effect. The state imposes an artificial stability. Under the urban asphalt the social tensions can grow discreetly, until an unpredictable moment when they burst forth and destroy that stability. History doesn't change in peaceful waves, but in violent ruptures. But if we wait, be it for waves or for ruptures, while the state busies itself every day with winning the contest, we won't be able to facilitate the rupture or be prepared when it comes.

We have to prepare ourselves. Yet while preparation is very important, courage and ease of action are more important still, and one does not attain these qualities talking and drafting proposals for hours on end, having to meet for three weeks before realizing an action. Ease of action is attained after the action. Courage is attained with practice, or with groups of friends who are also afraid but decide to confront this fear together.

We need affinity groups that are well put together, that have an *agility* to attack and to respond to social realities. If the security guards assault an im-

ates it—that a way out can appear on the horizon, distinct and opposed to the only exit that capitalism is capable of offering. A society without classes or more capitalism. Freedom or the destruction of the planet. These are the options, and we will continue to choose the former.

We know that sabotage against the structures of capitalism and the State in and of itself will not provide the answers for how to achieve our objectives but it will reveal the questions that give these structures shape.

Should the social struggles respect the laws, taking into account that they are made against us? Will the people in power voluntarily stop suppressing us because we're such a great majority?

Friday 24 (April): 400 cash machines throughout Barcelona are put out of commission.

Monday 27: 8 cash machines and two police cars had their locks glued in the municipality of Sant Martí. Attack with paintbombs and stones against the ETT Addecco in Sarrià - Sant Gervasi.

Wednesday 29: Paintbombs are thrown at the real estate office Tecnocasa at 3 in the afternoon in the neighborhood Clot - Camp de l'Arpa. Paintbombs, fireworks, and hammers are used against ETT Manpower (temp agency), la Caixa (a bank), and the office of Social Security in the neighborhood of Gràcia.

Thursday 30: 16 supermarkets have their locks glued in the neighborhood of Sants.

These actions isolated from the social struggles do not remain symbolic or anecdotal. Equally, the struggles without actions that are offensive and visible can remain eternally in mere protest. All the tools are necessary.

We've lost our fear! We're bringing an end to this circus and the clowns that defend it!

ATTACK CAPITALISM AND THE STATE! CONSTRUCT SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES!

Barcelona May 2009

"To respond to the evictions, to attempt to stop the dispossessions for mortgage payment failures, to avoid layoffs, to respond to the labor reviews and the welfare offices, counteract the police raids against immigrant workers, to expropriate what the crisis makes it difficult for us to acquire... If anything will bring about the crisis it is the intensification and generalization of social problems but also the need to confront them as well as we can. Are we ready?"
—from *Ruptura* no. 4

We've Lost Our Fear, We Won't Jump through the Hoop

"But when chance makes it so that the people trust in no one, something that happens occasionally, when they've been tricked by circumstances or by men, it necessarily comes to ruin."

—Machiavelli, *The Prince*

*"A lost man, what will he risk?
He who can no longer tolerate
His misery, if he unites with those who struggle
So that his day will be today
And none that has yet to arrive.
Everyone or none. All or nothing.
One alone cannot save himself.
The rifles or the chains."*

—B. Brecht

WE'VE LOST OUR FEAR! About the actions leading up to the First of May in Barcelona.

Today it is perhaps more difficult than ever to achieve a struggle that bears the fruits we want. And, despite it all, the struggle is the only path, a path we have wanted to make visible by pointing out, though timidly and weakly, some of those responsible for this misery that we've been suffering for centuries.

We are the generation of the defeat. "There's nothing that can be done," say some, "The revolution is not possible, it's better to try to be happy," others tell us. Facing the reality of constant crisis, we have realized the necessity to organize ourselves and attack. Because even though it may be very difficult to see a possible exit we know that only by upsetting the existing social imperatives can we come to imagine new relations and new possibilities.

It is, therefore, with the will to carry this struggle forward to its final consequences—the abolition of exploitation and of the State that perpetu-

migrant in the metro, an affinity group in that neighborhood should be able to respond with sabotage the same night. If we work on this agility, we will be able to respond immediately when there is a rupture, and in a rupture the first reactions of the society can characterize everything that follows. That is to say, with our response, we can change history. If we have to wait one week to plan a response, we can't: because then it wouldn't be a response, it would be a ritual.

Even when there are no ruptures nor even much social tension, our actions continue to be valuable. If there are attacks, they can serve as references for the rest of society, making visible that there is conflict and disagreement. Seeing that conflict is a fact, they might change their idea of the legitimate response in these situations. We will not win over large masses as long as the system appears to be functioning normally, but in the moment when they are searching for tools beyond the democratic and the controlled in order to respond to the indignity of living in this system, they will remember your actions.

Connecting Ourselves

Invisible actions aren't worth much. And their value is questionable if the rest of society only sees them through the eyes of the mass media. Our actions are for ourselves, for our enemies, and for society. They are not for communicating with the press or influencing their world of shadows. If they don't publicize our attacks, WE DON'T CARE. This is not to say we can ignore the media or any other elite institution and it will go away. Sometimes we have even seen that contradictions between the institutions can be exploited, and the media can be temporarily used against the police. But they must not be the audience for our actions, nor our means of communication. When we attack, we do not do it for them. But if the people in the neighborhood don't know that we have risked ourselves to attack the system—and every attack against capitalism should also be an act of love—this makes us sad. More actions can be carried out in broad daylight, checking out the surrounding streets first to make sure there's no passing patrols, dedicating thirty seconds to your target—all the while greeting the witnesses with a well masked smile—and disappearing into the multitude. In this way a simple painting or broken window becomes a public event, a little rupture in normality that will affect the rest of the day of everyone who saw it and infiltrate in their conversations with colleagues and family.

Sometimes clandestinity, acting at nighttime, is necessary. Sometimes our goal is not to communicate but to cause damage, to sabotage, if only for a while, the workings of the machine. But we should never forget: going alone against the state is suicide. Without society, we cannot survive, not as revolutionaries, and not even as healthy human beings. Without losing our own

identity or collaborating with the institutions, we have to participate in the movements and social struggles. We have to have a presence and create relationships with people outside of our circles. We shouldn't pass up a protest just because there will be lots of flags of the shitty political parties there. Instead, we should go in our own bloc, with black flags or the simple flag of direct action (which is a stick without the rag), so they see that we exist, that there is another possibility besides collaboration with the system.

We don't form a bloc to label ourselves—in fact we should abandon any exclusive radical aesthetic (which is to say open ourselves to many aesthetics) because one task of the mass media is to distinguish and separate everything, it is to say: *look, those are the radicals, they're different, they're just like that, and it doesn't have anything to do with you.* Instead we form a bloc to avail ourselves of a collective force and to keep from losing our identity. There is no person without identity, and you can't struggle without your own reasons.

Hiding yourself or dressing up and speaking like "a normal person" is to say that struggle is not normal, and this the lie of the state. It is also a vanguardist insult against everyone else to say that people can't understand your position if you express it honestly, and that they can't choose it or not choose it for themselves.

We need a political presence as well as a social and cultural presence. We must not let ourselves be surrounded. We need to relate to our coworkers and our neighbors. If they disappear one night and the neighbors never realize it, I've already lost. I was already disappeared. And thus, appearing in the lives of the others, we will also develop a *social intuition*, which is extremely important: understanding the level of social tension, the level of discord, the themes that provoke rage, and which type of attacks other people will understand.

Caring for ourselves

We do not attack to satisfy an impatience. With each attack, we must think: if I were in jail for this action, would I be proud? We can prepare, we can be cautious, but we also recognize that there will always be prisoners in the struggle. When there is a movement that attacks, the state will seek hostages, even if it can't find those responsible for the attacks. But life and struggle continue inside prison. Once we truly realize this we will be very strong. Jail is shit, but life in the street is also shit. In jail we can still learn and expand our minds, write and influence people, make art or fall in love, create deep and caring friendships, and we can create anarchy and struggle against authority.

The struggle in the prisons is easier when there is support from outside, just the same as how the struggle in the street is easier with support. And the most important kind of support is emotional. The insurrection has an emotional foundation. We struggle because we feel rage and hope, not because we drop below some minimum of income or nutrition or because the unemployment rate has exceeded a certain percentage. Many people who die of hunger obey up to the very last day. And we don't struggle because we are playing a role in a rational historical process—the materialist predictions of the Marxists have been as inaccurate as those of the economists.

So the attack cannot be an act of desperation, because if we feel desperate when we enter prison, or when we begin another day in the street without having seen any visible effect from our actions, we will give up. But if we speak of our feelings, if we search out our friends instead of leaving them alone with their "personal problems," if we take care of ourselves, then we will smash the capitalist-patriarchal isolation. We will create a collective force, and that is exactly what we need in order to struggle.
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